

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

IN JOINT CONVENTION

The hour having arrived, set by House Joint Resolution No. 524 --Relative to joint convention, address by Honorable David Nething, the Senate met with the House in Joint Convention.

The Joint Convention was called to order by Mr. Speaker Wilder, President of the Joint Convention.

On motion of Senator Hamilton, the roll call of the Senate was dispensed with.

On motion of Representative Naifeh, the roll call of the House was dispensed with.

Thereupon, the Clerk of the Senate read House Joint Resolution No. 524 authorizing the Joint Convention.

Representative Naifeh moved that the President appoint a Committee composed of four members from the Senate and four members from the House to notify Mr. Nething that the Joint Convention was in session and awaiting his arrival, which motion prevailed.

Mr. President Wilder appointed the following committee: Senators Atchley, Darnell, Henry and Moore; and Representatives Henry, Kisber, Naifeh and Starnes. Senator Darnell will serve as Chairman of this Committee.

The Joint Convention recessed pending the arrival of Mr. Nething.

The Joint Convention was called to order by Mr. President Wilder.

On motion, the roll calls of the House and Senate were dispensed with.

Senator Darnell announced that the Honorable David Nething was at the entrance of the House.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

The Committee escorted Mr. Nething to the front of the House Chamber.

Mr. President Wilder recognized Representative John Bragg, immediate past president of the National Conference of State Legislatures, for introduction of Mr. Nething.

Representative Bragg introduced the Honorable David Nething of North Dakota, President of the National Conference of State Legislatures, who addressed the Joint Convention.

Mr. President Wilder directed the Clerk to read House Joint Resolution No. 530, honoring Representative John Bragg.

Mr. President Wilder relinquished the Chair to Mr. Speaker McWherter, President of the Joint Convention.

Mr. President McWherter expressed thanks to Mr. Nething.

Thereupon, the purpose for which the Joint Convention was called having been accomplished, Mr. President McWherter declared the Joint Convention dissolved.

IN JOINT CONVENTION

The hour having arrived, set by Senate Joint Resolution No. 232 --Relative to joint convention, Governor's State-of-the-State Address, the Senate met with the House in Joint Convention.

The Joint Convention was called to order by Mr. Speaker Wilder, President of the Joint Convention.

On motion of Senator Hamilton, the roll call of the Senate was dispensed with.

On motion of Representative Naifeh, the roll call of the House was dispensed with.

Thereupon, the Clerk of the Senate read Senate Joint Resolution No. 232 authorizing the Joint Convention.

Representative Naifeh moved that the President appoint a committee composed of six members from the Senate and six members from the House to notify the Governor that the Joint Convention was in session and awaiting his arrival, which motion prevailed.

Mr. President Wilder appointed to the following committee to notify the Governor: Senators Burleson, Haynes, Kyle, Lewis, Longley, and O'Brien; and Representatives Tankersley, Drew, Lawson, McCroskey, Peroulas and Swann. Representative Tankersley will serve as chairman of this Committee.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

Mr. President Wilder recognized the Chief Clerk of the Senate, Clyde McCullough, for introduction of guests.

Mr. McCullough introduced the following guests who were escorted to the front of the House Chamber and seated:

The Chief Justice and the Associate Justices of the Tennessee Supreme Court;

The Honorable Mike Cody, Attorney General and Reporter;

The Honorable Cletus McWilliams, Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court;

The Honorable Jane Eskind, the Honorable Frank D. Cochran, and the Honorable Keith Bissell, members of the Public Service Commission;

The Honorable Gentry Crowell, Secretary of State;

The Honorable Harlan Mathews, State Treasurer;

The Honorable William R. Snodgrass, Comptroller of the Treasury;

The Members of the Governor's Cabinet and Staff;

Mr. President Wilder recognized Mrs. Lamar Alexander and children.

The Joint Convention recessed pending the arrival of the Honorable Lamar Alexander, Governor of the State of Tennessee.

The Joint Convention was called to order by Mr. President Wilder.

On motion, the roll calls of the House and Senate were dispensed with.

Representative Tankersley announced that the Governor was at the entrance of the House.

The Committee escorted the Honorable Lamar Alexander, Governor of the State of Tennessee, to the Clerk's rostrum where he delivered the following message:

GOVERNOR'S STATE-OF-THE-STATE ADDRESS

Governor Wilder, Speaker McWherter, Members of the 94th General Assembly, fellow Tennesseans,

This is my seventh annual State of the State Address. I want to begin by showing you a photograph, a fascinating picture of the United States at night, taken from a satellite.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

Most maps can be misleading. They don't really tell you where people are. This satellite photo does.

Look closely at where the lights are. They tell you where people are. They also tell you where America's manufacturing and distribution jobs will be during the next 20 years.

Put a pencil north and south across the map a little west of the Mississippi River.

That makes the message of the map even more striking.

Most of the lights and most of the people in the U.S. live east of the pencil.

Now pencil in Tennessee's border.

We are right in the center of the U.S. population or, in a businessman's terms, in the center of the market.

Three-fourths of the U.S. population is within 500 miles of our borders.

And as people continue moving to the South and West, we move more and more into the absolute center.

Our central location is important because 20 cents of every dollar America produces or sells goes to pay for transportation costs.

American businesses are struggling to save every dollar so they can compete in the world marketplace. Companies who make and sell things everywhere in the U.S.A. must look at Tennessee.

That helps explain why Federal Express brings all its packages to Memphis every night, or why Saturn and Nissan are here -- it would cost a couple of hundred dollars or more a car to make cars and trucks in Texas or Florida or New York to sell them everywhere in the U.S.A., or even everywhere in the Eastern U.S.A.

That is one reason why Komatsu chose Chattanooga, why there were more prospects looking for plant sites in the first six weeks of 1986 than at any time in our history, why we have attracted more new Japanese industry than anyone else in the last few years and why the Washington Post calls Tennessee the new industrial wonderland of the South.

Tennessee is in the center of things.

All this helps Tennessee families where we need help the most: in the pocketbook.

Family incomes are moving up.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

In the 70s we were averaging new investments -- and therefore new jobs -- at the rate of \$472 million a year. Last year we attracted \$4.5 billion in new investment. And only two states had faster-growing personal income than we did in the last quarter.

There is turmoil behind the income gains. Ten percent of our jobs disappear every year. That means that about 200,000 people have to find new jobs in Tennessee -- every year -- if we are to keep making gains.

So the key to our progress is not government giveaways to industry, or slowing down the loss of jobs that are destined to disappear, or even good marketing and recruiting.

The key is keeping an environment that attracts new jobs.

Remember what we offered when the biggest company in the world made the most publicized search for a place to put the largest investment in history?

While other states offered one billion dollars, we offered Saturn only the best place to build the highest quality car at the lowest possible cost.

Our central location is one reason Saturn is here, but it is not the only one.

Our location is our natural talent, but by itself, natural talent doesn't win the big games.

That's why tonight I want to talk about our competition for new jobs and what we must do to keep the flow of new jobs moving to Tennesseans who need them.

Specifically, I want to urge the Legislature to speed up our highway program, to give Tennessee one of the best networks of interstate and primary highways in America.

We know what highways need to be improved.

We have had the right-of-way for 11E in Washington County for 27 years. West Tennesseans started trying to connect interstates between Dyersburg and Jackson in the 1960s. A Middle Tennessee Parkway below Nashville has been on the drawing board at least since the early 1970s. Any Governor will try to build the same roads.

We know how much it will take to build the roads we need -- about \$2.8 billion -- and we know how much money we have each year to build these roads -- about \$100 million.

So we know it will take about 28 years to do what we need to do to the most important roads in the state, the 8 percent of the roads that carry 55 percent of the traffic, the roads to the cities where 90

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

percent of the people live and -- perhaps most important -- the roads where 90 percent of the new industries will expand or locate.

There are a couple of other things we know.

For less than the cost of one tank of gasoline, or about \$15 per motorist per year, we can cut about in half the time it takes to build all these roads, and cut in half again the time it takes to build the ones we most urgently need -- six Bicentennial Parkways and 15 priority roads.

This one tank of gasoline a year is the best investment in new jobs Tennesseans can make. And the time to do it is right now because the need is right now and the opportunity is right now.

Let me give you one example. Saturn will have 150 first-tier Saturn suppliers within 250 miles of Spring Hill. These 150 suppliers will, in turn, have 400 second-tier suppliers.

The decisions about who these suppliers are and where their plants will be will begin to be made this year.

One of the most important location decisions is how much it costs to get their products to Saturn and other automotive plants.

Today, automobile manufacturers have a "just-in-time" delivery system which means they want their supplies when they want them.

I would like to be able to say to these decision-makers and I would like for the next Governor to be able to say: While you are building your plant in Tennessee, we are completing the best state highway system in America so you can move your products where you need to move them.

And the new Saturn President has agreed to encourage his suppliers to locate in Tennessee and to locate in areas that need the jobs the most whenever possible.

Sometimes we throw numbers around without meaning much so let me slow down here just so I underscore just how big just the Saturn opportunity is.

Saturn's 650 first- and second-tier suppliers equals the number of new plant expansions and investment in Tennessee for 1982 through 1985 when we were having our best years.

Almost all of Tennessee is within 250 miles of Spring Hill. But so is almost all of Kentucky and so are parts of 11 other states.

And you can bet your bottom dollar that recruiters from all those states are busy right now going over those lists of suppliers.

So, how are we going to get them to Tennessee?

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

Let me invite you to join Bill Long, our Economic Development Commissioner, and me while we try to talk one of these suppliers into locating in Tennessee.

Let's take an automobile parts supplier -- call him Supplier X. One-third of our new prospects today are somehow related to the automobile industry. He is about to make a \$50 million investment. It would begin with 200 employees and eventually increase to 300.

Supplier X is considering seven or eight states in the central part of the eastern U.S., including all of Kentucky and Tennessee, the only two states all within the center.

Tennessee is on his list because of our central location and all the publicity about Saturn and Nissan.

But Supplier X has in his hotel room this four-page supplement about Kentucky that I have put in the packet on your desk.

Kentucky's sales job looks familiar, doesn't it? . . . touting new jobs, fairer taxes, school improvements.

"Why shouldn't I go to Kentucky?" Supplier X asks. "Isn't Kentucky's location even more central for an automobile supplier since most of the automobile business still is in the Midwestern states?"

Fortunately, we have plenty of good answers to that question. First, we will introduce Supplier X to our whole state -- from Mountain City to Memphis -- and suggest that he spread out from Spring Hill. We do not think all the new jobs in Tennessee ought to be in Spring Hill, and we do not think people in Spring Hill want them all there.

Then we will show Supplier X a series of maps.

First is THE RIGHT-TO-WORK MAP: it shows that Tennessee is the most centrally located state with a right-to-work law. Kentucky, for example, does not have one.

Central location cuts cost.

Right-to-work means quality.

Last year our Department of Economic and Community Development and the University of Tennessee's Center for Business and Economic Research asked 325 Tennessee manufacturers why they chose to come to or expand in Tennessee.

Other than location, the top four reasons were less union influence, right-to-work laws, the pro-business attitude of state government and high worker productivity.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

That's not somebody's guess or some politician's claim. That is what the people making the decisions said. Keeping our right-to-work environment is one of the most important things we can do to keep the good jobs coming in.

Next I would show our prospect THE "BETTER SCHOOLS" MAP.

It shows the 125 Tennessee school districts where citizen task forces are spending countless hours setting goals and developing report cards for their schools as a part of the Better Schools Program.

No state is doing as much as we are to improve our schools and help them be among the best in America. And although the Better Schools Program is still a one-and-a-half-year-old baby, already there are some results.

- * Supplier X will be interested to know that every Tennessee student entering ninth grade has learned basic computer skills; we were the first state to do that.

- * Our basic skills are up in the early grades.

- * Freshmen education students at UT are the brightest in history; four years ago their averages were the lowest on campus.

- * 36,000 teachers have voluntarily joined the Career Ladder, the country's model program for rewarding outstanding teaching.

- * St. Jude's Hospital is in Memphis today instead of St. Louis because the new Chairs of Excellence Program is making possible improved research at UT-Memphis.

Industrial prospects always ask about schools.

They know a community that sets high goals for its schools is likely to be the kind of place they want to be.

The next map is THE LOWEST TAXES MAP: it shows the state in the southeast with the lowest state and local taxes: Tennessee. Even after we pay for the proposed highway program, our overall taxes still will be the lowest in the southeast.

And we are one of only 12 states with a AAA bond rating.

Sound businesses like to be in states with sound governments.

Then, I would bring out THE HOMECOMING MAP. This one is about the biggest celebration in the state's history: Tennessee Homecoming '86.

Our celebration is part hoe-down, part history lesson and part family reunion.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

It is, community-by-community, a celebration of American values.

This map is covered with 700 dots because that many places with names are celebrating their roots, and looking to their future.

Some of our cities are always ranked among the best places to live in America.

Politicians' polls show that people in no state feel as good about the way their state is moving as Tennesseans do.

And Alex Haley is writing a book, Tennessee, that looks toward our state's 200th birthday in 1996.

Then I would show THE HEALTHY CHILDREN chart and mention that because of Honey Alexander's leadership, the Legislature's generosity and the efforts of health professionals, fewer of our babies die today than ever in history. The infant mortality rate is still much too high, we are aimed in the right direction.

- * Right-to-work.
- * Better Schools.
- * The Lowest Taxes.
- * Triple-A Bond Rating.
- * Tennessee Homcoming '86.
- * Healthy Children.

These are all things we are doing for ourselves to create in our central location an environment that attracts people and jobs.

Then I would mention to our prospect one more thing: Highways.

I would show him a map of our main highways: 1,100 miles of interstate highways, 6,000 miles of primary roads.

These 7,100 miles are only eight percent of Tennessee's road but they carry 55 percent of our traffic.

They go through the cities where 90 percent of our people live.

And it is along these routes that most of the new jobs locate.

I asked Bill Long to put 439 new plant locations and 939 plant expansions between 1981 and 1985 on a map to see what it looks like.

About 95 percent of the new plant locations and expansions are along these highways.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

They are especially along the interstates and especially in towns that are attractive places to live and along railroads.

Supplier X is most likely to tell us he is looking for a flat site that is:

1. Close to a good place to live, usually 30 miles from a metropolitan area;
2. Close to a good primary road, preferably within 5 to 10 miles of an interstate highway;
3. Near a railroad.

That is what we hear every time we talk to industrial prospects.

It especially applies to the largest plants.

Look at the Nissan site: 25 miles from Nashville, three miles from the interstate, a half-mile from a railroad.

Look at Saturn: 35 miles from Nashville, four-and-a-half miles from the interstate, less than a mile from a railroad.

Look at Toyota's new site in Kentucky: 15 miles from Lexington, Interstate 75 borders the site, and so does a railroad.

All three companies looked at Knoxville and liked it, but the sites there were too far from the interstate and not flat enough.

This is why our highway plan recommends 159 new miles of interstate-quality controlled-access highways.

One of the main reasons Nashville is attracting so many jobs is that it is one of three cities in America with three connecting interstate highways.

By connecting I-55 at Dyersburg and I-40 at Jackson, we will connect two attractive cities and create a new Jobs Corridor that will spread new jobs all over West Tennessee.

By connecting interstates at Dickson and Franklin and Murfreesboro and Lebanon we will spread the attractiveness of the Nashville area into parts of Middle Tennessee that have not been so fortunate and, at the same time, give Nashville a chance to reduce congestion and avoid becoming another Atlanta.

Connecting Interstate 181 at Erwin with Interstate 26 in North Carolina will create a new Jobs Corridor that will benefit all the counties in Upper East Tennessee.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

The Technology Corridor from the Knoxville airport to the Oak Ridge complex will be the focus of new job opportunities in the Knoxville area just as the Research Triangle is in North Carolina.

Even if the preferred sites for many big plants are along interstates, outside the metropolitan area, many others are along the state's primary roads, near smaller cities.

So the better our primary road system, the better our chance to locate those jobs in Tennessee rather than in Kentucky, or Georgia, or Alabama.

I asked the Department of Transportation to tell me what needed to be done to make our main highway system among the best in America.

First, we looked at what we called Jobs Corridors: the main arteries that are essential if people and commerce are to spread across our state.

They are familiar to every member of the Legislature.

Highway 64, the lifeline to Memphis across the southern part of Middle and West Tennessee -- through Somerville, Bolivar, Selmer, Savannah, Waynesboro, Lawrenceburg, Fayetteville, Pulaski and Winchester to Monteagle.

The North-South route down Highway 45 from Kentucky through Jackson to Mississippi.

The North-South routes down Appalachian Corridor J from Kentucky through Cookeville and Sparta to Chattanooga and through McMinnville to Tullahoma.

Millington to Arlington to Collierville.

Paris to Clarksville and Paris to Highway 64.

Dyersburg to Jackson. Dickson to Spring Hill to Murfreesboro to Lebanon.

Chattanooga to Rockwood, Cleveland to Copperhill, the Knoxville airport to Oak Ridge, Morristown to Rogersville to Surgoinsville to Kingsport, Newport to Greeneville to Johnson City, from the Tri-Cities over the mountains to the interstate in North Carolina.

There are 22 of these corridors. That is where most of the new work needs to be done. I hope you will study them yourself. You will find that they are the roads that every Governor, every Legislature will want to build. Most of the projects already have some form of approval of the Legislature. None of the rest are new ideas.

Then I asked the Department to detail the projects.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

They are on your map.

They cost about \$2.8 billion in today's dollars.

We have about \$100 million a year to spend on these projects.

So it will take 28-plus years in today's dollars to do what needs to be done.

That is totally unacceptable and it is why I have made this proposal.

Let me put in more personal terms what a 28-year schedule means.

Let's take Highway 64 from Memphis to Monteagle. This is a lifeline to Memphis and for each of the county seats along the southern border of West and Middle Tennessee.

It will take a quarter-billion dollars of improvements to four-lane widen, level, put in passing lanes -- do the kinds of things that need to be done to make it a good transportation corridor.

Can we wait 28 years?

Or Highway 22, which should be four-laned from Union City to Parker's Crossroads at I-40.

Can it wait 28 years?

How about the Waverly By-Pass, the Mt. Pleasant By-Pass, the Franklin By-Pass, the Clarksville By-Pass, the Hendersonville and Gallatin By-Passes, the Bristol By-Pass, the improvements on 109 and the traffic mess at Bell Road in Nashville and the rest of Briley Parkway?

There is not enough money to finish all of them in less than 30 years.

If Supplier X is looking at the Cookeville or Chattanooga area -- or anywhere in the Upper Cumberland area -- he will want to know when Corridor J will be finished creating a North-South route from Celina through Cookeville to Chattanooga.

The only honest answer today is that it may be 25 or 30 years.

Monroe County 's Tellico site ought to be prime but the road to the Knoxville airport is dangerous.

Any nobody in Upper East Tennessee wants to wait for 30 years to build the road across the mountains or the Bristol By-Pass. They had already waited about that long to complete the Quad-City Beltway which will all be obligated this year.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

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So we know what roads need to be built, and we know it will take 28 years to do it with the money we've got.

Can the taxpayers afford my proposal to build the most urgent in ten years -- instead of 28 -- and finish the rest within five years after that?

To pay the bill for my new road proposal will cost the average motorist less than one tank of gasoline a year.

That's about \$15 a year, or a dollar and a quarter a month.

Tourists and truck drivers will help you pay the bill.

People who don't drive won't pay any, and people who drive less will pay less.

If ever there was a time to pay and put more money into roads it is now, while the price of gasoline is going down and people can afford it.

If there was a time to use our borrowing power it is now, when we have reduced our debt by 25 percent and the cost of interest is lower than it has been since 1978.

Because cars are getting better mileage, the motorists' actual cost of driving will be less than it was before 1978 even with the new tax.

And even the tax increase, Tennessee's state and local taxes will still be the lowest of any state in the southeast.

And no one should look for the federal government to bail us out. The federal government is over-extended. Washington is beginning to realize that and is cutting back on federal highway funds which will further slow down roads that a lot of people are counting on.

People who buy and drive \$5,000 and \$10,000 cars and trucks expect us to increase their cost by \$15 a year -- if it is needed to build roads and if it helps bring in jobs.

Since I outlined my proposal a month ago, some of you have made some suggestions. Let me deal with them briefly:

1. YOU DIDN'T LIKE OUR FINANCING PLAN -- You were right and we have changed it. There are 20-year bonds instead of 30-year bonds. This is \$1 billion less interest to pay. It is conventional financing. I believe you will find we meet your concerns.

2. YOU WANTED TO KNOW HOW SPEEDING UP THE 21 TRUST FUND PROJECTS WOULD AFFECT THE REST OF THE PRIORITY ROAD

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

PROGRAM -- I should have explained that more clearly last month. The main advantage of the proposal is that it cuts about in half the time it takes to build 209 urgent projects on our main highways. Those projects are important to every part of the state. The map before you shows the projects; your materials include a specific listing of each. Commissioner Kelley and his staff will be glad to discuss them with you.

These are not new projects. All that is new is that instead of waiting for 28 years to complete them, we can do them in 15 -- and the most urgent in much less time than that.

3. IT FAVORS ONE SECTION OVER ANOTHER -- It does not. West Tennessee -- with 26 percent of the population -- has 28 percent of the projects, Middle Tennessee has 39 percent and East Tennessee has 33 percent.

4. IT DOES NOT HELP THE BIG CITIES -- It helps the cities a lot. Nashville must have the Middle Tennessee Parkway or it will be as congested as Atlanta. Memphis must have the lifeline from Monteagle to Memphis, the Arlington-to-Millington Connector and the Nonconnah Parkway. The Quad-Cities need a road to North Carolina. Knoxville must have the Technology Corridor and Jackson and Cookeville need North and South Corridors. And none of them wants to wait 30 years. There is \$3 million for public transit, if the program passes. And local governments may keep the \$12 million extra they received last year, if the program passes. And, of course, this proposal does not affect the parts of the annual highway budget that helps big cities the most -- the interstate and urban programs.

Here are some of the other concerns you had:

5. IT CONTINUES A DISTRIBUTION FORMULA THAT DISCRIMINATES AGAINST THE URBAN AREAS -- It has nothing to do with that. It puts the money into the state road program, except for providing increased help to cities for public transit and leaving local governments with the money they got last year.

6. WE RAISED GAS TAXES LAST YEAR -- We did, but \$40 million of the \$66 million increase last year went to city and county roads to help keep down property taxes. The rest went to maintenance of our roads and we don't have a penny to spare in that category.

7. IT TIES THE HANDS OF FUTURE GOVERNORS AND LEGISLATORS -- It unties their hands. It gives them money they will need to spend on roads. What we are doing is simply providing more money to finish the primary road program in half the time.

8. THE PLAN NEEDS MORE STUDY -- The normal process has given and will give it plenty of study. Highway 11E has been studied for 27 years; we've had the right-of-way that long. The Dyersburg-to-Jackson interstate connector has been studied since the 1960.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

The state's roads don't need more study. They need more money. Every single project will have to be approved each year by the new Governor and Legislature. And most of them already have been approved at least once.

I am afraid some who are talking about "study" just want to kill it deader than a doornail.

9. IT WILL COST MORE THAN WE SAY -- It might very well, and it may take even longer than 28 years to do what needs to be done. We are establishing a schedule on the basis of conservative estimates on today's dollars. There are many factors that could change that, and everyone should know that from the front end.

10. ROADS ARE NEVER BUILT AS FAST AS WE HOPE THEY WILL BE -- This is a frustration on mine as well as yours. The other day I walked on the new road from Johnson City to Elizabethton, part of the new Quad-City Beltway. It has been my first priority from the day I walked the present road eight years ago.

It is still muddy. After this year, the money is all obligated, but it will be 1988 before anyone drives on it.

Roads take a long time to build. 28 years is too long to wait. We know what needs to be done and we should get on with it.

11. YOU WILL HEAR THAT IT IS INCONVENIENT TO DEAL WITH IT IN AN ELECTION YEAR -- I believe you will find it more "inconvenient" not to deal with it. It will be hard to explain to constituents driving to Kentucky to get new jobs why we didn't approve a road plan that would bring the jobs here. It will be hard to explain to people in Upper East Tennessee why they should wait 28 years to get their road across the mountains or to motorists in traffic jams in Nashville and Memphis why it was "inconvenient" to help this year.

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A few minutes ago I told you about my walk along the unfinished road between Johnson City and Elizabethton.

That walk reminded me how long it takes to build new roads.

It also reminded me of something else: how billboards are interfering with out state's natural beauty, one of the main reasons people like to live and work here.

For example, along that five-and-one-half-mile stretch in Upper East Tennessee there could theoretically be 227 legal billboards. The billboard companies argue there could be only 27.

Well, I think that's 27 too many. There should be none on that stretch, and on others of our most scenic routes in Tennessee.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

The billboard industry is up in arms over this proposal, claiming I am trying to put Mom and Pop out of business.

Well, these big interstate billboards cost \$2,000 to \$2,500 a month to rent. Not many Mom and Pop operations can afford that.

And the companies themselves aren't exactly small local businesses.

One company in Knoxville owns 1,050 billboards -- counting both sides.

Another has 500 in Nashville alone.

Really, the state is doing a reasonable job on controlling new billboards. But some city officials are letting the billboard companies get completely out of hand.

It is hard to get exact counts.

I am glad to see that the Knoxville City Council has put a moratorium on new billboards for 90 days to try to get a handle on things and that Johnson City officials are keeping a tight control on new signs.

I hope citizens will let legislators know how they feel about my Cleaner Highways proposals and will tell their mayors and local officials how they feel about billboard control at home.

That's why in 1980 we created the state's scenic parkway program -- the 3,000 miles of roads with the mockingbird sign -- limiting new billboards and junkyards. Already it is paying off. For example, Highway 31 through Spring Hill is on the Scenic Parkway and unless local government changes the zoning, they can avoid clutter.

That is why I have also recommended this year a Cleaner Highways program which would create some new scenic corridors -- like Johnson City to Elizabethton -- and buy interstate billboards between the cities so there could be 670 miles of billboard-free interstates.

Tennessee should have done this years ago with federal money when North Carolina bought 3,300 boards, South Carolina 1,850 and Virginia 900.

I have recommended that we experiment with logo signs as a substitute for billboards.

The non-conforming billboards which we have a right to buy -- and should buy -- are most of the reason we have tree-cutting problems; if there were no billboards in the wrong places, 80 percent of the tree-cutting controversy would disappear.

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

I do not want to be misunderstood.

Bill Long and I have plenty to say to Supplier X and dozens of other like him.

Tennessee is moving.

We've got our natural talent: good location, hard-working people and natural beauty.

And we're helping ourselves more than we ever have: with a right-to-work pro jobs environment, with a Better Schools Program that leads the nation, with 700 Homecoming communities working to make a better place to live, with the lowest taxes, a AAA government and healthy children programs.

And we have a good road system. We have improved our bridges, taken over 3,000 miles of county roads, put new money into maintenance, and solved 25-year-old urban bottlenecks. Remember where Malfunction Junction, and Overton Park, and I-440 and Walnut Street Bridge and the Quad-City Beltway were seven years ago?

For all these reasons, people with jobs are coming our way, people who haven't given Tennessee a second look before.

And they are coming right now.

And it will help the most to bring jobs into Tennessee right now if we can tell them we are building the best state road system in America while they are building their plants.

Tennessee is moving in the right direction today -- but not because of timid thinking and endless studies.

We are moving because we have been willing to face the future and act, to see our opportunities and take them.

This Legislature -- and especially its leadership -- has been crucial to every important decision that has moved this state ahead during the last several years.

The people of Tennessee like to see our state move. They appreciate that kind of leadership.

We need new roads now. Another 28 years is too long to wait for new roads or new jobs. The cost of less than one tank of gasoline a year for the average motorist is the best investment in new jobs we'll ever have a chance to make.

Mr. President Wilder relinquished the Chair to Mr. Speaker McWherter, President of the Joint Convention.

Mr. President McWherter expressed thanks to Governor Alexander.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

Thereupon, the purpose for which the Joint Convention was called having been accomplished, Mr. President McWherter declared the Joint Convention dissolved.